



**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE
DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD**

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March 25, 2020

Dear Catholic School Families:

May God's peace be with you. This afternoon, Governor Baker extended the suspension of all public and private PK-12 schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts until May 4, 2020. After Governor Baker's first declaration, the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Springfield transitioned to remote learning. At that time, we hoped that we would return to school in early April. Knowing this was doubtful, we created remote learning guidelines and resources to ensure our schools continue to provide a high quality education in the event of an extended suspension. The principals of the schools and the Catholic Schools Office are meeting this Friday to discuss this plan and identify the support necessary for full implementation. The Catholic Schools Office will continue to monitor the State's response to this situation and recommend action based on any new information or mandates.

A link to a press release regarding Governor Baker's decision is below:

<https://www.mass.gov/news/baker-polito-administration-announces-extension-of-school-and-non-emergency-child-care-program>

At this point, remote learning will continue until May 4, 2020. Your school leaders will communicate with families additional directives, resources, and support that ensure your children are learning at home in the most reasonable and anxiety free manner. Our schools have provided resources for families who are now assisting much more directly with their own children's education. Additional resources will continue to be provided by your schools and on the Diocese of Springfield's Catholic School Facebook Page. A link is below:

<https://www.facebook.com/CatholicSchoolsSpringfield>

With the extended nature of the suspension, The Catholic Schools Office will provide guidance that is more formal to the schools. We will also provide the additional support, resources, and professional development our teachers need to maximize the effectiveness of remote instruction. If you have any questions regarding your school's plan for remote instruction please contact your child's teachers or principals. If the mode of delivery from your school is difficult to sustain due to a lack of resources or other restrictions, please contact your principal to discuss ways to ensure that your children continue learning at home effectively.

As a community of faith, please join us, in praying a nine-day Novena to Our Lady for healing and support for the suffering and an end to the pandemic starting March 26, 2020. Today is the Annunciation. We reflect on Mary's "yes, fiat" to the Lord, allowing Him to come into our world. Let us draw near to her at this time asking her to assist in ending this pandemic as well as provide us consolation, drawing us closer to Christ at this time.

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

May the Lord bless and keep us all in His tender loving care through this difficult time.

In Christ through Mary,
Daniel R. Baillargeon, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Springfield

Pax Christi,
Joshua Agnew
Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Springfield